

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) An optical fiber comprising:

a central core having a relative refractive index delta Δ_C ,

a multi-pedestal region in contact with and surrounding said core, said multi-pedestal region having an outer radius of less than 25 μm and at least two pedestals, each of said pedestals being in contact with and adjacent to at least one other pedestal, each of said pedestals having a relative refractive index delta Δ_{ped} lower than Δ_C , at least one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value higher than 0.2% and a width of less than 6 μm and another one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value lower than 0.2%; and

another region in contact and surrounding said multi-pedestal region, said another region having relative refractive index delta which is lower than that of any pedestal.

2. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 1, wherein said another region is cladding, said cladding having an index of refraction n_{Cl} which is lower than that of any pedestal.

3. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 2, wherein said multiple-pedestal region includes 5 or fewer pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% and the widths of the pedestals is 6 μm or less.

4. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 3, wherein the index of refraction and Δ_{ped} , of each of said pedestals in said pedestal region, is lower than that of the preceding pedestal.

5. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 3, wherein the widths of these pedestals is 0.2 μm to 5 μm .

6. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 1, wherein said fiber has mode field diameter MFD between 6 μm and 8 μm at 1550nm and a cut-off wavelength $\lambda \leq 980 \mu\text{m}$.

7. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said pedestals has Δ_{ped} value higher than 0.3% and lower than 0.7%.

8. (**Currently Amended**) An optical fiber comprising:

a central core having a relative refractive index delta Δ_C ,

a multi-pedestal region surrounding said core, said multi-pedestal region having an outer radius of less than 25 μm , said region having at least two pedestals, at least one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value higher than 0.2% and lower than Δ_C and a width less than 6 μm , and wherein said multiple-pedestal region includes 6 or fewer pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% and the widths of each of these pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% is less than 5 μm ; and

another region in contact and surrounding said multi-pedestal region, said another region having a relative refractive index delta than that of any pedestal.

9. (**Canceled**)

10. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 8, wherein said multiple-pedestal region includes 5 or fewer pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% and the widths of each of these pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% is between 0.2 μm and 4 μm .

11. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 8, wherein said multiple-pedestal region includes 6 or fewer pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% and the total width of these pedestals with Δ_{ped} values higher than 0.2% is less than 15 μm .

12. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 8, wherein said fiber has mode field diameter MFD between 6 μm and 8 μm at a wavelength of 1550nm and a cut-off wavelength of no more than 980 nm.

13. (**Currently Amended**) An optical fiber comprising:

a central core having a relative refractive index delta Δ_C ,

a multi-pedestal region surrounding said core, said multi-pedestal region having an outer radius of less than 25 μm , said region having at least two pedestals, at

least one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value higher than 0.2% and lower than Δ_C and a width less than 6 μm ; and

another region in contact and surrounding said multi-pedestal region, said another region having a relative refractive index delta than that of any pedestal The optical fiber according to claim 8, said optical fiber having a taper ratio between 1.5 and 3 and the difference $LP_{01} - LP_{02}$, measured at $\lambda=1550\text{nm}$, larger than $0.0019 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$.

14. (Currently Amended) The optical fiber according to claim 13, 8, said optical fiber having a taper ratio between 1.5 and 3 and wherein the difference $LP_{01} - LP_{02}$ is between $0.0019 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$ and $0.003 \mu\text{m}^{-1}$.

15. (Currently Amended) An optical fiber comprising:

a central core having a relative refractive index delta Δ_C ,
a multi-pedestal region surrounding said core, said multi-pedestal region having an outer radius of less than 25 μm , said region having at least two pedestals, at least one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value higher than 0.2% and lower than Δ_C and a width less than 6 μm ; and

another region in contact and surrounding said multi-pedestal region, said another region having a relative refractive index delta than that of any pedestal The optical fiber according to claim 8, said optical fiber having (i) a taper ratio between 1.5 and 3; and (ii) non-adiabatic taper induced loss of less than 0.1dB.

16. (Currently Amended) The optical fiber according to claim 15, 8, said optical fiber having (i) a taper ratio between 1.5 and 3; and (ii) wherein the non-adiabatic taper induced loss of is less than 0.06dB.

17. (Original) The optical fiber of claim 8 wherein at least one of said pedestal corresponds to a region in said optical fiber that has Ge doping of 2 wt% to 17 wt%.

18. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 8, said optical fiber having central core radius $R_c \leq 5 \mu\text{m}$.

19. (Original) The optical fiber according to claim 18, said optical fiber h having central core radius $0.8\mu\text{m} \leq R_c \leq 2.5 \mu\text{m}$.

20. (Currently Amended) An optical coupler including at least one fiber comprising a central core having a relative refractive index delta Δ_C , a multi-pedestal region in contact with and surrounding said core, said multi-pedestal region having an outer radius of less than 25 μm and at least two pedestals, each of said pedestals being in contact with and adjacent to at least one other pedestal, each of said pedestals having a relative refractive index delta Δ_{ped} lower than Δ_C , at least one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value higher than 0.2% and a width of less than 6 μm and another one of said pedestals having Δ_{ped} value lower than 0.2%; and another region in contact and surrounding said multi-pedestal region, said another region having relative refractive index delta which is lower than that of any pedestal of claim 1, said optical fiber having a taper ratio between 1.5 and 4, wherein taper ratio is the ratio between fiber diameter at a non-tapered region and fiber diameter at the narrowest, tapered region.

21. (Currently Amended) An optical coupler including at least one fiber of claim 20 18, said optical fiber having a taper ratio between 1.5 and 3.